

**What's
this
about
Child
Support?**



The Child Support Enforcement Program

The Child Support Enforcement Program was established by federal and state law. The program's primary purposes are to locate absent parents and to obtain financial support from them for their children.

How are absent parents located?

Child Support Enforcement can locate an absent parent in a number of ways. Investigators can use local resources and leads — and the State Parent Locator Service in Jefferson City has access to address information maintained by several other state agencies. In addition, Child Support Enforcement can utilize the Federal Parent Locator Service which is authorized by law to obtain address information maintained by federal agencies and the agencies of states other than Missouri.

How is support obtained?

Child Support Enforcement will first attempt to obtain payments from defaulting parents on a voluntary basis. If the absent parent fails to cooperate, Child Support Enforcement will then take appropriate enforcement actions including income assignments,

garnishments, property liens, interception of unemployment compensation benefits, and interception of federal and state income tax refunds. A referral may also be made to the local prosecuting attorney for appropriate legal action. In addition, in cases where a court order does not exist, action can be taken to establish paternity and establish court-ordered support.

What are the benefits?

The major benefits of the program are as follows:

- The right of children to the support of their parents is ensured.
- The need for many families to rely on AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) is eliminated.

Requirements For Families Receiving AFDC

Cooperation with Support Enforcement

New applicants who are approved for AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) benefits and families already receiving AFDC must help Child Support Enforcement in locating the absent parent and obtaining support unless it would not be in the best interest of the child to do so. Cooperation includes helping to establish the paternity of a child born out-

of-wedlock for whom AFDC benefits are claimed.

Assignment of Support Rights

Child-support rights for all children who receive AFDC are assigned to the Division of Family Services in behalf of the state of Missouri.

Cost of Services

There are no charges for support enforcement services in behalf of children receiving AFDC benefits because the child support is paid to the state of Missouri.

Payment of Child Support

Payments are usually made to the circuit clerk in the county where the court order was established. All payments are then forwarded to the State and used to offset the cost of the AFDC program. All payments are in the form of a cashier's check or money order. Whenever the amount of the child support being collected by Child Support Enforcement equals or exceeds the amount of the AFDC grant, the AFDC case will be closed and the child-support payments will be sent directly to the family.

Requirements For Families Who Do Not Receive AFDC

Application

Location and/or support enforcement services are also available to families in

behalf of children who do not receive AFDC. An application for these services must be made at the local Child Support Enforcement office. For the location of the Child Support Enforcement office serving your area, call or write the address listed on the back of this pamphlet. In most instances, the application process can be completed by mail.

Child Support Payments

Payments will be made to the custodial parent or as stipulated in the court order in non-AFDC cases.

Services Not Provided

- property settlements
- visitation rights
- insurance or medical expense
- alimony when not in conjunction with child support
- custody
- attorney's fees
- court-ordered obligations of indebtedness other than back child support

Child Support
You owe it to your kids.

Responsibilities Of The Absent Parent

1. Send the child-support payments to the proper circuit clerk on a timely and regular basis.
2. Notify Child Support Enforcement of any change in home or employment address.

How Payments Are To Be Made

You will mail a cashier's check, certified check or money order to the circuit clerk identified in the court order or as instructed by Child Support Enforcement.

What Happens If There Is No Court Order For Child Support

A determination will be made as to your financial responsibility and ability to pay. An order for support will be secured through the court. If you have any questions concerning child support, contact the Child Support Enforcement Office in your area.

What Happens If Child Support Is Not Paid

If the child support is court ordered, you could be charged with contempt which may result in imprisonment. Other actions which may be taken include garnishments, income assignments, property liens or interception of unemployment compensation benefits and interception of federal and state income tax refunds.

To Help Secure Child Support From An Absent Parent, You Should Provide The Following:

Information about Absent Parent's

- last known address
- employer
- wages and deductions
- social security number
- birthdate

Legal Documents to Help Establish the Support Obligation

- birth certificates
 - marriage licenses
 - divorce decrees
 - record of support payments
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To obtain the address and phone number of
the Child Support Enforcement Office which
serves your area, write or call:

**Department of Social Services
Child Support Enforcement
P. O. Box 1527
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102
(314) 751-6420**

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